

# Selling Vaults and Building Your Value Through Video

by Wayne Stellmach, Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc

The value of services provided by funeral professionals is a matter of perception, no different than the value placed by the consumer on any product or service. While value is complex because of the many criteria on which people assess it, it most often is about the experience. A Nissan Cube and a Lamborghini Aventador both get you from point A to point B, but the experience is different. Watching a concert from the front row versus the back row makes no difference in the music heard, but the experience is different. And in both examples, emotion plays a significant role in the experience.

The emotional experience derived from a funeral contributes extensively to the perceived value of the services and by extension the funeral professional. Will the family look back on the services as heartwarming? Did the funeral professional provide guidance and ideas that helped the family create that meaningful experience? Were all the options presented so that the family could make better educated decisions? Providing guidance to the bereaved is at the very heart of what it means to be a valued funeral professional.

Indeed, “professional” is a title that is earned by competence and practice. However, all professionals utilize tools to help them create or deliver their product or service. A new tool has surfaced in the funeral professional’s toolbox which helps educate families on some of the products and service options available to them: video.

## What’s Old is New Again

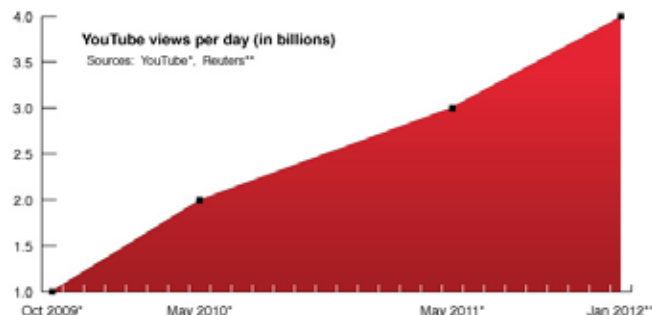
Of course, video has been around for quite awhile, but new applications of video in the funeral industry continue to evolve, from tribute videos to funeral home YouTube channels. A recent innovation is using video to better educate families about burial vaults, both prior to the arrangement conference as well as in the selection room.

Independent research commissioned by Wilbert Funeral Services found that only 42% of families are

aware of the need for an outer burial container for either traditional burial or cremated remains. Consequently, the fundamental task is to inform families about the purpose of a burial vault. Video can greatly assist in this, supplementing and enhancing the funeral professionals’ presentation to the families of burial vault options.



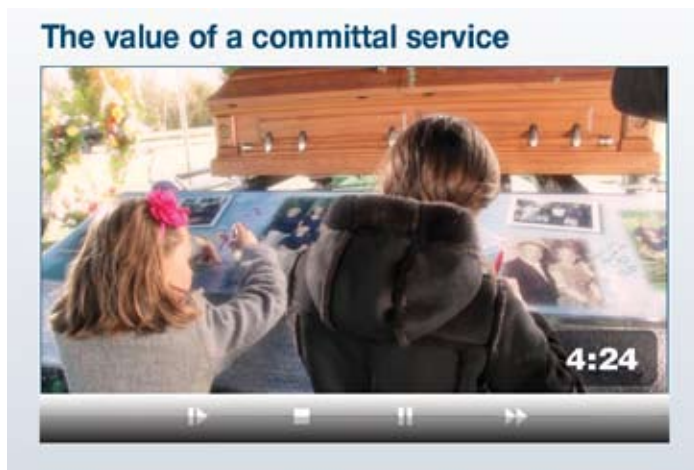
Today’s consumers embrace technology and videos in particular. Witness the impressive statistics of YouTube, where four billion video views every day occur and over 3 billion hours of video are watched every month. This YouTube generation will increasingly be making funeral arrangements for their loved ones, so connecting with them through the medium of video can help solidify a funeral professional’s positioning with this demographic.



### **Web-Based Video Begins the Learning Process**

The first opportunity to engage with a family may be online, in some cases even before they have a need. Many funeral homes have videos on their websites about dealing with loss, general guidelines on funerals, or an overview of the funeral home and staff. Additional videos that begin to educate the family on specific products or service options can add further value – and result in a more efficient arrangement conference and a better experience for the family.

A better, more fulfilling experience for the family was the goal in a video called *The Value of a Committal Service*, produced for funeral professionals by Wilbert Funeral Services. Designed to encourage families to complete the funeral with a graveside committal service, *The Value of a Committal Service* provides insightful explanation of a committal service and the tremendous emotional and spiritual benefits experienced by family and friends. Perhaps even more important in today's transient society, the impact and reconciliation realized by this final ritual and commemoration is enduring.



This video is available at no charge for downloading or can be hyperlinked to a video streaming site and placed on a funeral home website. Families watching this video online prior to coming in for the arrangement conference come better-prepared and anxious to work with the funeral professional to create a fitting service. This is an opportunity for funeral professionals to provide skilled guidance and enhance their value.

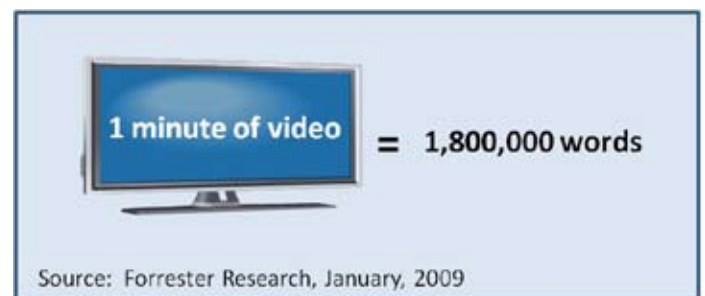
### **Videos in the Selection Room**

It's well known that to many families, the selection room is an overwhelming experience that complicates decision-making. The burial vault is typically one of the last items to be discussed with families and there

is a tendency to rush through the presentation so the family can be on their way. However, most families appreciate being shown all the options so that they can make the decision in full knowledge. Here too, video can help.



Wilbert has developed two videos, also complimentary to funeral professionals, which objectively explain the purpose of burial vaults and present the options in an educational style. These videos not only educate but also make families aware of meaningful options such as personalization of the vault carapace that help build a more meaningful service and tribute to their loved one. Both of these videos have been found to improve the family's understanding of burial vault options versus traditional verbal presentations. Why?



Because people think visually. When we read or listen to words, we convert them into visual images encoded with emotion. But when information comes directly in the form of images, our mind comprehends more and makes more connections because it's not doing any word-to-image translation. In a January 2009 study, Forrester Research found that when it comes to comprehension, one minute of video is equivalent to 1.8 million words! Simply put, video is significantly more powerful than words.

However, Wilbert recognized that most funeral homes do not have monitors in the selection room, so they designed special LCD monitors that can hang on the typical selection room slat-wall. To engage the families, a slideshow runs silently on the Display Animation unit, attracting the attention of the family while providing answers to common burial vault questions. Families are prompted by the slides to watch the videos, but the funeral professional can also activate either video at any time.



**Wayne Stellmach is the Director of Marketing for Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc.**

### The “E’s” of Video

In summary, the power of video is demonstrable and is being applied with great success in selling burial vaults. In fact, selling is actually removed from the equation. Instead, it’s about education – one of the seven “E’s” of video:

- Engages the family through motion, images, color and sound**
- Empowers the family to create a fuller experience**
- Enlightens and provides ideas and possibilities**
- Eases the presentation and discussion of burial vaults**
- Elevates the choices made by the family**
- Enhances and supports the expertise of the funeral professional**
- Educates completely, consistently and compellingly**

*Wilbert*<sup>®</sup>

*Commemorating Life with Respect*<sup>SM</sup>

**WE’LL TREAT YOU LIKE FAMILY.**

**ONLY BETTER. NO YELLING.**

**INVESTORS HERITAGE**  
*Life Insurance Company*

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

**DAVID CLARK**  
800.422.2011, x. 1021  
dclark@ihlic.com

200 CAPITAL AVENUE  
FRANKFORT KY 40602-0717  
www.ihlic.com ihlic@ihlic.com

*Doorway to Your Heritage*

- Comprehensive Preneed Program
- Quick Benefit Payment
- Lead Generation Program
- At Need Funding Solutions
- Incentive Trips
- Memorial Webpages
- Competitive Commissions
- Family Friendly Customer Service